


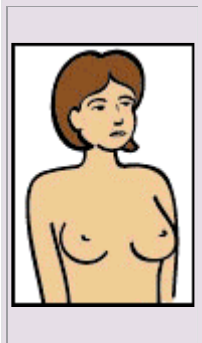
# How to do breast self exam

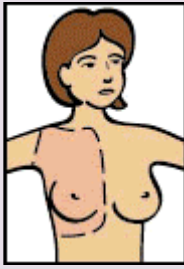
From: [exploringwomanhood.com](http://exploringwomanhood.com)

Breast Self Examination or BSE takes just a few minutes, and you only need to do it once a month. Remember, while a change in the look or feel of your breast does not automatically mean you have breast cancer, it is important to report any change to your doctor for further evaluation.

Breast Self-Exam	Breast Self Exam Look For These Signs and Symptoms
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A lump or thickening in the breast or armpit</li><li>• A change in the size or shape of the breast</li><li>• Dimpling (or indentation) of the skin</li><li>• Discharge from the nipple</li><li>• Tenderness in the nipple</li><li>• A change in the color or feel of skin</li><li>• Darkening around nipple</li></ul>

As you do this examination remember that some lumpiness is normal for many women. Self-examination helps you become familiar with the normal texture of your breast tissue. Compare the feel of one breast with the same site on the other breast. They should be similar. Follow the step-by-step instructions below for both visual and feeling breast self exam. Refer to the diagrams as reference. Review your technique with your physician to refine your technique and have your questions answered.

Visual Self Exam	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First, stand in front of a mirror, keeping your arms relaxed at your sides. Notice the shape and size of your breasts. Compare both breasts. It is not unusual for one to be larger than the other.</li><li>• Next, look at your skin. Take note of the texture and color. Changes in shape and size occur.</li><li>• Hands on hips. Look at the same things with your arms in different positions.</li></ul>
Feeling Self Exam	



- Notice the area within the dotted line. This is the area you need to examine.



- To examine your right breast, lie on your back. Place a pillow or a folded towel under your right shoulder. Put your right arm out, with your elbow at a 90 degree angle. This position flattens the breast and makes it easier to examine.



- Use the padded area of your finger, not the tips. Use the pads of three or four fingers of your left hand to examine your right breast.
- Move your fingers in very small circles. For each small circle, change the amount of pressure so you can feel all levels of your breast tissue.
- Don't lift your fingers from your breast as you move them; you might miss something that way.
- Make a pattern of vertical strips. Cover the self-exam area in vertical strips. Start in your armpit and move down to just below your breast. Some women use lotion to make it easier for their fingers to slide over their skin.
- Now move your fingers over- just the width of one finger- and move up again. Continue this up-and-down pattern until you have covered the entire self-exam area, from your collarbone to just below your breast.
- Relax your arm and examine your armpit. Some parts of your breast go up into your armpit. Examine this area again, with your arm relaxed at your side. It will feel a little different in this position.
- To check for fluid coming from your nipple, gently squeeze your nipple. Clear or milky fluid coming from the nipple is more common than bloody fluid. All nipple discharge should be checked by your doctor.

- Repeat steps for the feeling exam using your right hand to examine your left breast.
- Some women find it helpful to repeat the above examination steps while in the shower or bath.